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FM AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5295
INFO RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 2178
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7030
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 3265
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 04 ALGIERS 000198

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D COPY --CHANGE OF CLASSIFICATION

NOFORN
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NEA FOR K.HARRINGTON AND M.POPAL

EO 12958 DECL: 02/22/2023
TAGS PREL, PGOV, AG

SUBJECT: SCENE SETTER FOR A/S WELCH VISIT TO ALGERIA
REF: A. ALGIERS 111 B. ALGIERS 110 AND ALGIERS 140 C. 07 ALGIERS 1806 D. 07 ALGIERS 1807 AND 08 ALGIERS 0075 E. ALGIERS 141

Classified By: Ambassador Robert Ford, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) We and the Algerians are looking forward to your visit next week. There was a prominent article about your visit, generated with help from
AN UNHAPPY COUNTRY

2. (C) There is much discussion among political circles about the constitution, the third term and the succession issue, but precious little about
THE VISION THING

3. (C) These political, economic and social problems notwithstanding, Algeria is richer than ever. The oil and gas sector is running up record profits.
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programming.)

TERRORISM PROBLEM NOT A THREAT TO STABILITY

4. (S/NF) The social discontent enables al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to find a steady supply of recruits but not enough to
COUNTER-TERROR COOPERATION VERY GOOD

5. (S/NF) As the AQIM threat has ratcheted up, we have increased our collaboration with Algerian military intelligence. They are prickly, particularly
MILITARY TO MILITARY: WE MUST BE PATIENT

6. (S/NF) While the Algerians are not rushing to expand our mil-mil relationship. it is slowly growing. For the first time in early 2007 the Algerians
ALGIERS 00000198 003 OF 004

REGIONAL POLICIES: FAR APART FROM US

7. (C) Bouteflika is very much his own foreign minister and his thinking about regional politics has evolved little from the 1970s. He loyally follows
-- Peace Process: They line up behind the Arab League consensus, arguing in private that it is hopeless to try to exclude Syria and Hamas from the
-- Lebanon: The Algerians back Arab League efforts and hope for consensus to develop among the Lebanese factions. Their senior MFA official worries
-- Iraq: President Bouteflika told Senator Nelson last summer that the U.S. should not withdraw too quickly from Iraq lest security deteriorate
-- Iran: Algerian officials remember Iranian support for Algerian Islamists in the early 1990s and are suspicious of Iran's regional intent. Perhaps
-- Western Sahara: This is the issue that the GoA cares the most about and you will likely receive an earful. The GoA still lingers over the historic
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exhaustion of broad American patience with the long-standing dispute will be the best way of shaking loose the Algerian fixation on Baker.

AND THE GUANTANAMO PROBLEM

8. (S) For the past two years we have sought GoA approval for the repatriation of some of the two dozen Algerians held at the facility. During
FORD